The Department of Computer Science

Ekaterina (Kate) Vinkovskaya

Ekaterina completed her Bachelors degree in Computer Science and Mathematics in 2006 and was awarded a Kiwiplan Scholarship. She did her Honours degree in Statistics.

"After I graduated I worked at Westpac Bank as a Risk Analyst. I enjoyed this job a lot!

Originally I had planned to become a software developer, but when I was close to completing my degree, my goals changed. The knowledge I gained from my Computer Science major still remained not only valuable, but essential. My degree in Computer Science was highly regarded by my employer at Westpac (in part because he was also a Computer Science graduate and knew how hard we had to work to earn our degrees) and was an important factor in my landing the job.

My job as a risk analyst involved helping the bank to accurately predict future behaviour and estimate the current behaviour of borrowers to optimize how much money the bank should hold aside to protect themselves against defaults.

Here in New York, my experience has shown that to get an internship at a top financial firm even applicants with a PhD in statistics are required to have extensive knowledge of programming languages, particularly C++, so the choice to study Computer Science has proven to be a wise one even for a statistician.

I am now doing a PhD at Columbia University in New York. My knowledge of software languages continues to serve me well in my doctoral work. Data analysis relies heavily on programming - basic knowledge of coding is crucial, but my colleagues with a higher understanding of software development have a greater advantage and freedom to implement their ideas more quickly, efficiently and in a sophisticated manner."